

**Taking Action to Combat Antisemitism:
Follow-up Action Plan for Advancing the Implementation of the Recommendations of the UN
Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in his 2019 Report to the UN General
Assembly (A/74/358)**

In his 2019 report to the UN General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur identified violence, discrimination and expressions of hostility motivated by antisemitism as a serious obstacle to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief. The Special Rapporteur also stressed, as has UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, that antisemitism is not a problem for the Jewish community alone. Rather, antisemitism is a phenomenon that is “toxic to democracy and mutual respect of citizens,” that threatens all people’s human rights.¹

A review recently undertaken by the Special Rapporteur of trends in antisemitism since 2019 revealed many positive developments in combating antisemitism but also enduring challenges.² The troubling concerns brought to the Special Rapporteur’s attention include:

- Antisemitism remains a persistent and serious global problem, with a range, scale and depth that has continued to expand since 2019. Disturbingly, although the number of documented incidents in some countries decreased in 2020, attacks on Jewish people and sites reportedly were committed at record-high levels in many countries once again in 2021. While a substantial proportion of antisemitic incidents are committed by individuals who are affiliated with or influenced by extremist movements, antisemitic attitudes have also seemingly grown more prevalent among people who do not hold extremist views, and antisemitic discourse of several varieties has become increasingly normalized.³
- Political and religious leaders can play a crucial role in speaking out firmly and promptly against antisemitic incidents,⁴ and indeed, many public figures, including government officials, senior UN officials, politicians, religious leaders and civil society organizations have condemned antisemitism even as it has grown more pervasive. Regrettably, however, in several recent instances, high-profile speakers have expressed antisemitic views but have not been condemned by the political, religious or societal actors who would be most likely to be seen as authoritative by the audiences to which antisemitic hate speech was directed.
- In many countries, a lack of awareness of what antisemitism is, and particularly its contemporary manifestations, remains widespread. This affects the ability of individuals at all levels of society, from educators, to politicians, to law enforcement and judicial officials, to understand when actions and rhetoric are likely to have been undertaken with antisemitic intent or motivation or perceived as antisemitic by relevant audiences and reduces the prospect that antisemitic acts and statements will be countered, that victims of antisemitic acts will obtain redress, and that the rights of victims of antisemitic incidents to enjoy their human rights will be publicly reaffirmed in accordance with international standards.

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to the UN General Assembly on Antisemitism, UN Doc. A/74/358 (2019), <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/358>, in part quoting UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, see <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-26/secretary-generals-remarks-high-level-event-power-education>.

² “Developing an Action Plan for Monitoring and Combating Global Antisemitism: Report of an Expert Consultation Organized by AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights in Cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief,” <https://www.jbi-humanrights.org/ABI%20SR%20FORB%20Antisemitism%20Consultation.pdf>. See also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-religion-or-belief/antisemitism>.

³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/04/rise-antisemitic-hatred-during-covid-19-must-be-countered-tougher-measures>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/01/international-holocaust-remembrance-day>; <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/01/international-holocaust-remembrance-day-27-january-2022>. See also

⁴ <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/22/17/Add.4>, appendix, para. 36; <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/40/58>, annex II.

- Despite some important changes made to improve authorities' documentation of antisemitic incidents and to address the persistent reluctance of victims of antisemitic incidents to report them, today very few governments' efforts to monitor and report on antisemitic incidents are resulting in an accurate and meaningful assessment of the situation in their countries. A leading authority, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, recently noted that the available data in Europe is a “gross underestimate” of the problem of antisemitism.⁵ The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) has expressed similar concerns.⁶
- Cooperation between authorities and Jewish communities to facilitate information sharing and encourage reporting about antisemitism has increased since 2019 in several countries, and key institutions have recognized the importance of partnership, but this remains the exception rather than the rule.
- Many governments, regional institutions, and civil society organizations have made welcome investments in and efforts to protect and promote Jews' physical security, but the fact that so many Jewish communities require this physical security for their religious, educational and cultural sites is a cause for serious concern.
- A growing number of countries have imposed restrictions on the important, centuries-old religious practices of *shechita* (kosher slaughter) and *brit mila* (male circumcision) that violate the right to freedom of religion of members of their Jewish communities and could threaten the viability of continued Jewish communal life in those countries.
- Monitors have documented a substantial increase in the prevalence of and public engagement with antisemitic content on several online platforms since 2019.⁷ While several social media and other technology companies have committed to respond to the prevalence of online antisemitism,⁸ the efforts that those platforms have taken to diminish its visibility – and not all are making such efforts – have thus far not been sufficient to stem its spread.⁹ There is also an urgent need to ensure that these regulatory initiatives do not result in overbroad or illegitimate restriction of online expression for purposes other than protecting members of targeted groups from harm.
- Many governments and other actors have already made commitments to undertake additional measures to combat antisemitism in the coming years, as reflected *inter alia* in the new EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2022-2030),¹⁰ the revised General Policy Recommendation No. 9 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI),¹¹ and the pledges made at the October 2021 Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.¹² However, not all governments and relevant stakeholders have participated in initiatives such as these, and the existing enforcement and oversight mechanisms to ensure that the commitments that have been made are implemented are relatively weak or nonexistent. The United

⁵ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2021-antisemitism-overview-2010-2020_en.pdf, p. 5.

⁶ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/504244>; see also <https://hatecrime.osce.org/index.php/hate-crime-data>.

⁷ See, e.g., <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d73c833f-c34c-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>; <https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/antisemitism-in-the-digital-age.pdf>.

⁸ For example, since January 2021, Facebook and Instagram users searching for terms associated with the Holocaust or denial of it have been prompted to visit AboutHolocaust.org, a site established in 2018 by the World Jewish Congress and UNESCO to provide young people with essential information about the history of the Holocaust and its legacy (see <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/49/86>, para. 32).

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/factsheet-6th-monitoring-round-of-the-code-of-conduct_october2021_en_1.pdf

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/recommendation-no.9>; the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers subsequently noted the adoption of GPR No. 9 and invited Member States to take it into account. CM/Del/Dec(2021)1412/4.9 (2021).

¹² <https://www.government.se/4ad3b7/contentassets/7d3985b4106c41e69d699719533f16c0/outcome-document---pledges-presented-at-the-malmo-international-forum-on-holocaust-remembrance-and-combating-antisemitism.pdf>.

Nations has been actively engaged in the above-mentioned initiatives and has an important role to play in encouraging further action that complements and reinforces these initiatives.

The eight recommendations outlined below are intended to enable key stakeholders to make further progress in implementing the recommendations set out in the Special Rapporteur's 2019 report on antisemitism and to address the serious challenges identified above. In formulating them, the Special Rapporteur engaged with a number of regional and international actors committed to combating advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence generally and antisemitism specifically.

The Special Rapporteur reiterates the vital importance of implementing all measures to combat antisemitism and to promote and protect the rights of Jews and of all people to freedom of religion or belief, including this eight-point action plan, in full conformity with relevant international human rights standards, and together with the Rabat Plan of Action,¹³ the "Faith for Rights" framework,¹⁴ Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18,¹⁵ and the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech.¹⁶

Governments and other stakeholders should regularly review the implementation and the effectiveness of these recommendations and make their findings publicly available.

1. Adopt and communicate a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitic statements and incidents

- a. Government officials should explicitly and publicly disavow and take a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitic statements by members of their parties or administrations, and they should ensure government employees are disciplined appropriately for any antisemitic acts or statements.
- b. Politicians and faith leaders should clearly and publicly condemn antisemitic acts and incidents, particularly high-profile ones, if they are in a position of influence with respect to audiences likely to be affected by them, and effectively convey to their constituencies that antisemitic conspiracy theories, stereotypes, and tropes and statements that deny or distort the facts of the Holocaust are false and harmful to Jews and are inconsistent with principles of equality and mutual respect.

2. Establish national structures to ensure consistent attention to understanding and combating antisemitism

- a. While some governments have explicitly addressed antisemitism in stand-alone national action plans or in comprehensive national plans to combat discrimination or hatred, others have not explicitly named antisemitism as a problem requiring attention and acknowledged its unique characteristics. Every government – including in countries where no Jewish communities reside – should adopt a national action plan to combat antisemitism; or, alternatively, adopt a national action plan to combat hatred on racial, religious or other grounds that explicitly addresses antisemitism and its unique characteristics and manifestations. All such plans should set out measurable goals and their implementation should be monitored and evaluated regularly. Governments should ensure that Jewish communities are consulted in the development of these plans.
- b. Governments that have not done so should appoint a Special Envoy or national coordinator of domestic efforts to monitor and combat antisemitism and ensure that the official's responsibilities include coordinating and regularly engaging with Jewish communities and with other national and

¹³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/freedom-of-expression>

¹⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights>

¹⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/minorities/combating-intolerance-against-persons-based-religion-or-belief>

¹⁶ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/hate-speech-strategy.shtml>

international actors focused on combating antisemitism. Governments should ensure that other national mechanisms to promote freedom of religion or belief, tolerance, and diversity explicitly include the fight against antisemitism in their respective mandates.

3. *Ensure all of society can recognize antisemitism and know the facts of the Holocaust*

- a. Governments should use the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism¹⁷ as a *non-legally binding* educational and training tool and ensure it is incorporated, together with relevant human rights standards-based guidance on protecting freedom of opinion and expression, into training and educational materials for all public officials, such as police, prosecutors, and judges, government employees, educators, and national human rights institutions, and integrated into diversity and inclusion programs.¹⁸ Training and educational materials should recognize and reflect that antisemitism is often expressed in coded language and illuminate this phenomenon with contemporary and context-specific examples.
- b. Governments should ensure that education about the manifestations and impact of antisemitism faced by Jews and Jewish communities and accurate educational material about the Holocaust, contemporary Holocaust denial and distortion, and the history and contribution of Jewish communities to society is made available at all levels of the educational system and ensure educators receive instruction on addressing the Holocaust and antisemitism, with reference to the “Words into Action” materials developed by UNESCO and OSCE/ODIHR and to the IHRA Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion.¹⁹ Government should invest in developing high-quality educational materials on antisemitism that seek to foster critical thinking and media and digital literacy in order to enable young people to resist, counter and challenge antisemitic prejudices and stereotypes; they should also review curricula, textbooks and other educational materials to ensure that they are free of stereotypes, and that Jewish history, life and culture are presented in a comprehensive and balanced way.
- c. Educational institutions should provide training opportunities for teachers and educators that utilize and promote effective, research-based pedagogies to address antisemitism through education and to respond to incidents of antisemitism in classrooms and in educational environments.²⁰ These training materials should also include the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and should be made available to administrators, teachers, and other relevant staff and faculty, together with guidance on applicable international human rights standards on guaranteeing freedom of expression ensure . Educational institutions should ensure that addressing antisemitism is included school and

¹⁷ <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>. Since its adoption by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2016, the IHRA Working Definition of antisemitism has been formally adopted or endorsed by 34 States, many sub-national governments, universities, civil society organisations and sport organizations, as well as by organs and officials of the European Union, Council of Europe, and Organization of American States. See <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism/adoption-endorsement>. The Special Rapporteur recommended that all States adopt the Working Definition for use in education and awareness-raising and for monitoring and responding to manifestations of antisemitism in his 2019 report, recalling that the IHRA Working Definition clarifies that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic,” and that determinations concerning antisemitism must always be made with regard to “the overall context.” See UN Doc. A/74/358. The ECRI, in a 2020 Opinion which is reiterated in its GPR No. 9 (2021), welcomed the IHRA Working Definition and encouraged Council of Europe member states to take it into account as a non-legal tool, in particular in the areas of data-collection, education and awareness-raising. See also <https://rm.coe.int/opinion-ecri-on-ihra-wd-on-antisemitism-2755-7610-7522-1/1680a091dd>. The EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life encourages EU Member States to “adopt and use the IHRA definition of antisemitism and encourage local authorities, regions, cities, and other institutions and organisations to do the same.” https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/eu-strategy-on-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life_october2021_en.pdf.

¹⁸ See <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d3006107-519b-11eb-b59f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

¹⁹ See <https://www.osce.org/project/words-into-action>; <https://www.osce.org/odihr/470712>; <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>. See also UNGA Resolution 76/250 on Holocaust Denial (2022), <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/250>.

²⁰ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/470712>

university policies, including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives; and ensure that all students have recourse to confidential complaints mechanisms where concerns about antisemitism can be raised and brought to the attention of officials that have received training on addressing such complaints in accordance with human rights standards.

- d. Governments should ensure that their foreign policy and development efforts consistently promote freedom of religion or belief, equality and non-discrimination. They should promote the sharing of knowledge and good practices to address antisemitism through education and devote resources and attention to initiatives aimed at preventing and combating antisemitism, including through peer-to-peer learning, education, research and awareness-raising; and should undertake due diligence to ensure that they do not support actors or initiatives, including in the cultural and educational arenas, that advance antisemitic conspiracy theories, stereotypes, or narratives or Holocaust distortion or denial, or that seek to glorify the historical legacies of figures implicated in Holocaust-era crimes or other antisemitic acts.²¹

4. *Improve national efforts to monitor, record, and publish data on antisemitic hate crimes and incidents and support victims of antisemitism*

- a. Every government should enact hate crimes legislation that identifies antisemitism as a prohibited bias motivation and is clear, concrete and easy to understand, and is in full conformity with international human rights law.
- b. Governments should ensure that all law enforcement officials receive training on identifying victims of antisemitic hate crime and on recognizing antisemitic bias in crimes, in line with international standards, and ideally should develop the training with input from Jewish communities.
- c. Governments should strengthen the effectiveness of local and national mechanisms for monitoring and recording hate crimes, including by, inter alia, adopting hate crimes identification, investigation and reporting policies that are gender-sensitive and in line with international standards; developing hate crimes collection and reporting systems; establishing specialized units or officials with responsibility for hate crimes; creating confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms; ensuring greater official outreach to communities affected by hate crimes; and encouraging regular consultations with and the development of cooperation agreements with civil society organizations to facilitate reporting.²²
- d. Governments should gather and regularly publish data on hate crimes, acts and incidents, including disaggregated data on antisemitic incidents. Antisemitic incidents should be identified as a distinct category of hate crimes and data on antisemitic incidents should be disaggregated by gender of victim, location of incident, and motivation of perpetrator whenever possible.
- e. Governments should ensure appropriate, gender-sensitive protection and support is available for victims of antisemitic hate crimes or incidents, including online incidents, and ensure that they obtain redress.

5. *Ensure Jewish communities' physical safety and ability to practice their religion*

²¹ See UN General Assembly resolution 76/250.

²² See, e.g. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/ec-2017-key-guiding-principles-recording-hate-crime_en.pdf and https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/ec-2017-key-guiding-principles-recording-hate-crime_en.pdf.

- a. Governments should make available sufficient resources to ensure that all Jewish places of worship, educational and cultural sites, memorials, cemeteries, and individuals requiring protection receive it and should engage in regular outreach to Jewish communities to assess their protection needs.
- b. Governments should review any existing or proposed measures that Jewish communities identify as potentially limiting their ability to engage in religious rituals and practices such as *shechita* (kosher slaughter) and *brit mila* (male circumcision) that are elemental and essential to Jewish life and seek to make reasonable accommodations to allow Jews to manifest their religion in line with international human rights standards.

6. *Curb the spread of harmful antisemitic narratives online while appropriately safeguarding freedom of expression*

- a. Social media companies should ensure that their community guidelines clearly convey that all forms of antisemitic content and Holocaust denial and distortion are not permitted, and that these guidelines are transparent and easily accessible to users, and more broadly that they are taking effective action necessary to uphold human rights and protect targeted individuals and groups from physical or mental harm, in accordance with international standards. They should consult with representatives of Jewish communities regarding the contents of their guidelines in order to understand what content is harmful in different contexts.
- b. Social media and other internet technology companies should ensure that their algorithms do not promote antisemitic content or narratives or content that denies or distorts the Holocaust to users, without exception.
- c. Internet technology companies should not facilitate public access to platforms, sites or applications that could or are being used to spread antisemitic content but are not undertaking to prohibit and take action to discourage its spread.
- d. Social media and other technology companies should train and sensitize all personnel, including content moderators, on recognizing antisemitism as well as how to identify and take action on antisemitic content while respecting freedom of expression.
- e. Social media and other technology companies should hire personnel and sufficient, effective content moderators with appropriate language skills and the knowledge and cultural awareness necessary to receive and to act on reports from users about antisemitic content while respecting international human rights standards. They should design and review flagging algorithms to ensure that they recognize coded antisemitic language, and ensure the availability of accessible and easy-to-use complaint procedures.
- f. Social media companies should ensure appropriate safeguards to allow for determinations about content reported as antisemitic to be appealed and promptly reviewed to ensure that freedom of opinion and expression, in line with international human rights standards, is upheld.
- g. Internet technology companies should be transparent about the processes they have in place to identify, remove, or reduce antisemitic content and about the practical impact of such processes.²³ Social media companies should regularly publish disaggregated information reflecting the volume of antisemitic content on their platforms; the volume of antisemitic content reported by users; the

²³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377231>

volume of content acted upon as a result of automatic review; the actions taken; and any outcomes of appeals.

- h. Governments should require social media companies to publish information about the operation of their algorithms and examine impact on the spread of hate speech and to reach agreements with researchers allowing for access to their algorithms on mutually acceptable terms. Governments should regularly commission independent studies of the presence of antisemitic content on social media companies' platforms and their response to users' reports.
- i. Governments should ensure that efforts to regulate social media companies' treatment of content that constitutes hate speech are clear, easy to understand, and are only undertaken for legitimate purposes such as the protection of targeted individuals and groups from harm and are otherwise in line with international standards on freedom of expression.

7. *Express solidarity with Jewish communities and strengthen intercommunal and interfaith cooperation*

- a. Civil society actors should refrain from amplifying or promoting antisemitic messages and clearly reject attempts to justify antisemitic narratives for any reason. They should engage in outreach to Jewish organizations and communities and express solidarity with and support for communities affected by antisemitism. Diverse faith communities should be engaged in efforts to combat antisemitism.
- b. Governments must foster a 'whole of society approach' to combating antisemitism and promote the values of tolerance, non-discrimination, and pluralism as reflected in the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, and including by supporting efforts to preserve and promoting Jewish history and culture.

8. *Ensure international organizations devote appropriate attention to combating antisemitism as a human rights concern*

- a. Leaders of international organizations, especially the United Nations, should clearly condemn antisemitic acts and statements, as Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations Miguel Moratinos, among others, have done on several occasions.²⁴ They should react promptly to condemn antisemitic statements expressed at official meetings or made by personnel of the organization. They should ensure that all personnel of their organizations receive training on how to recognize and respond to antisemitism, in line with international standards on freedom of expression and prohibition of incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, and are disciplined if they express antisemitic views. They should ensure all personnel have access to effective mechanisms to which they can report antisemitic incidents.
- b. All international organizations should designate a high-level focal point on antisemitism with responsibility for regularly engaging with representatives of Jewish communities and organizations, and with national envoys and coordinators on antisemitism, on strategies to address antisemitism. In-country representatives should consult with Jewish communities to understand their situation and concerns.

²⁴ See, e.g. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sgsm21124.doc.htm> and <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19252.doc.htm>; see also <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-08-23/note-correspondents-press-statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-of-the-high-representative-for-the-united-nations-alliance-of-civilizations-the-attack-the>.

- c. Governments should take actions at international organizations reflecting their commitment to combating antisemitism, including reporting on measures they have taken to combat antisemitism to relevant human rights mechanisms and encouraging efforts by international organizations to combat antisemitism and coordinate with one another in the exchange of best practices. They should engage seriously with concerns expressed by Jewish communities if activities and decisions by those international organizations are having the effect of advancing antisemitic narratives or sentiments.
 - d. Officials, independent human rights experts, and monitoring bodies mandated by international organizations should condemn antisemitic acts and crimes, where appropriate, recognizing that these implicate States' human rights obligations. UN experts are encouraged to periodically assess the status of States' and other stakeholders' implementation of this strategy and identify areas where improvements are required and to proactively invite Jewish communities to provide information as part of these efforts.
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